

## Editors Ramblings

Its only been a week or so since I completed last months newsletter but an impending operation on my carpal tunnel will stop me typing unless I only use my right hand which is as useless as a chocolate teapot! So, it is with great joy I have received an article from Phil on the ownership of a Ducati to give you a break from my warbling's. Well almost as it's the last instalment of my 2018 summer trip this month. So next month we could do with some more articles from you all to give us a taste of your motorcycle life.

Remember we have our Facebook page – please join and contribute on it - Only for club members – any weird names or business names let us know so we can allow you to join the page.  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/362204533842150/>

Email me on [biker5chef@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:biker5chef@yahoo.co.uk) or 07590596380 for WhatsApp sending pictures or texts or phone!

The Highlander

# South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists Newsletter February 2019



1994 to 2019



## A Word from the Chair

Not a lot to say this month as above its only been a week since my last few words. I have managed to get out on the bike in the first week in January on a day where the roads were greasy from not much rain but not much warmth either. We just had to take it easy and enjoy the fact that we were able to be on two wheels at this time of the year without it being really nasty out there. We all know although we are in the last couple or so months of winter these can be the worst months for the weather to bite hard. Will we get another "Beast from the East" again?

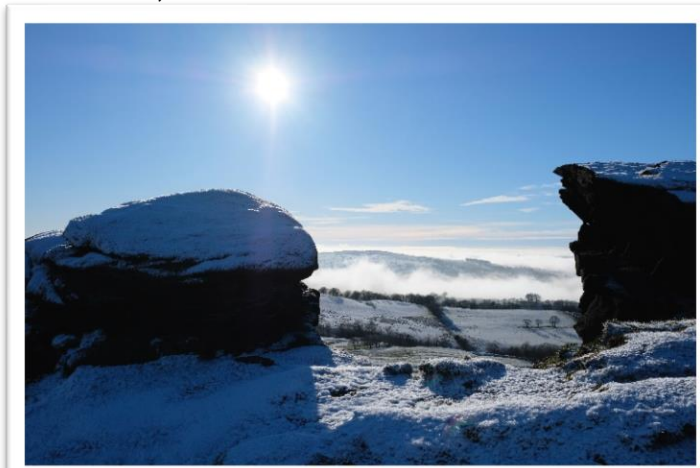
Please note the Land Rover Experience that we could attend in available events – I will leave this in for this month but if we get no interest, I will delete this from the newsletter.

Happy riding everybody, stay safe

Gordon

**A lot of walking this month in**

**The snow**



## Presidents Page

Firstly, I would like to wish you all a Very Happy New Year, I hope you had a good Christmas and spent quality time with family and friends.

Now we look forward to 2019 and what it holds in store for us, this year is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary a milestone which must be marked, so if you have any thoughts on how to celebrate this achievement please let us have your thoughts.

We will be running three courses during the year, this is what we do after all, and we will also run an Observer training course at the end of the year.

Dave Coomber and Richard Newnham will be running the social rides every Sunday from Costa Coffee, so why not turn out and blow off some of those Christmas cobwebs.

I have started my reflections of the last 25 years, giving an insight as to how it all started.

I hope the sun will shine and the roads will be dry, I am full of enthusiasm for the coming year and the people I am going to meet, see you at Costa.

That is all from me for this month, so until next month, safe riding.

Chis Steel

President.



## Northern Spain & the Pico's – continued – the last instalment!

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August 192 miles**

The final full day is here, and we are still getting the good weather as we start in blue skies yet again but this time it is a more comfortable twenty odd degrees not thirty odd! This morning it was more rural roads through Montamarta then the N-631 to Puebla de Santbria. It was right onto the N630 to Benavente. The roads and area were pretty flat today at this point, but we were still at two thousand feet in altitude. There were a few very straight roads again so we made good progress without any fuss, we knew we were going to get the good stuff later on so we were happy to take it easy. A quick pit stop for fuel and a drink then we were off again towards Cimanos de la Vega and then San Millan des los Caballeros. A longer stint here before lunch we continued on till we were nearer the Pico's again and we went through Cistierna where the roads tightened up and we got a bit more focused as we saw the mountains in the distance get closer with the road starting to climb a little. Over a couple of bridges over a lake and a couple of tunnels we arrived at Riano for lunch and a long wait while they cooked burgers and toasted sandwiches one by one for the group! We were now let loose on our own to do what we wanted over the last forty miles.

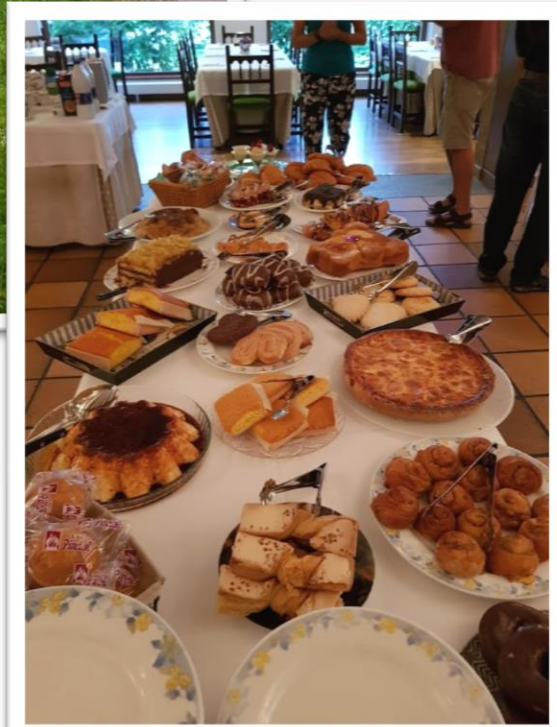


**The famous Stag**



## Northern Spain & the Pico's

Out of town on the N-621 towards Potes having done the Panes on the way down we passed over the blue railed bridges over *Riano Lake* and the road just got better as it wended through the valley and into the mountains, lined with Armco one side and rock the other we were meant to be taking it easy to admire the view but it was not easy to keep sensible and not enjoy the road, CK might have spat his dummy out a bit at the back, don't know why, I was taking it easy honest! The road did narrow a bit and the surface was not the best in places with it cracking and slanting making you pay attention a little bit more. Now CK had been going about the "Stag" in the Pico's all holiday and how Richi Vida had been there bla bla (Bla Bla's cut shot as only forty pages available!) yes, he did go on about it that long! Well the Stag reared its bronze head at a hairpin with a fabulous view down the valley to Potes so a stop and photos were taken to keep him happy, I was too as it was great. Back to the bikes and CK was leading to keep him happy and I went to the back to GoPro the other three having fun on the way down as the roads surface smoothed out for the last few miles, another fantastic bit of road to have memories off. Potes reached it was a left to the hotel eight miles to Arenos and a swanky hotel for our last night in Spain.



## Northern Spain & the Pico's

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> August 80 miles

Ah well it had to come to an end eventually, the final day in Spain is here with a shortish ride to Santander for the ferry. It never is great to know you are packing up for the final time, but we still had some good riding to do. Out of Arenos we went and, on the N-621 through the amazing Desfiladero de La Hermida Gorge winding through an impressive ravine. This had a lot of roadworks on it with very loose surfaces every mile or so to dance over! I had got ahead after our early fuel stop to try and get the drone up for some footage of the bikes going through the gorge. Well this did not go to plan as the drone required a strong gps signal to get a stable flight, well it was having none of it and was handling like a drunk wasp! It was with great de light that I managed to get it on the ground in one piece! Just in time to see the convoy of bikes go past! Ah great plans and all that. Back on the bike at least I had a little chase on! We had a right turn to go into and over the mountain to go towards the coast but the sat nav route did not play ball and I was off course a little bit over the mountain and there was a morning mist that gave the road a damp covering – our first of the holiday. It soon improved though as I caught up with the group in Ruento for a coffee stop. From here it was plane sailing to Santander on the main roads and our wait to get on the ferry for the overnight trip home. Another calm trip got us to Portsmouth in the morning where we all said our goodbyes for us going our different ways home. Well a few of us kept together and CK and myself took the long way home through Wales to avoid the motorway monotony, well who wants to end a holiday that way anyway!

Well that's another tour completed, and more places visited and safely stored in my memory for years to come. And with doing these tours you get to know more friends and motorcycling buddies to share these experiences with. There is almost too much to mention as a highlight but the National Park and the Potes and Panes roads were exceptional, just get on YouTube and search for these areas and you will see what I have been saying about this area, simply stunning. Let's hope next year's holiday is half as good!



The Highlander



## The Real Cost of Riding...

### Why Did My Dream Bike Had to Give My Bank Manager Nightmares?

Readers may remember that I wrote in February last year about having my trusty 2007 650 VStrom cleaned and treated by [www.allyearbiker.co.uk](http://www.allyearbiker.co.uk). They did such a good job making the bike look like new after another harsh winter that I decided to try my luck on eBay and sold my trusty steed for £3,250 just a few days later.

I had used the Suzuki on a daily basis for 2 ½ years. I had added 30,000 miles and done pretty much all my own servicing. In all time I had the bike, I had put on 5 tyres, bought a new battery and replaced the chain and sprockets once. I bought the bike in 2013 with 6,000 miles on the clock for £3,500. I used the bike every day in all weathers, did a camping trip to Spain with my daughter on the back and the North Coast 500. It never once let me down.



### The VStrom in the Pennines on the way back from the NC500

So, after a reliable, extremely low-cost but often uninspiring 30,000 miles on the middleweight workhorse VStrom – the big question was – “WHAT NEXT”?

For several years I had been dropping into Ducati Manchester to drool over the bikes on display... So, I made another visit – telling Martin the manager there that I thought a MultiStrada was the bike for me – but giving him the challenge of finding me a clean bike, with full luggage for a price that “starts with the number seven”.

I thought this an impossible task – so imagine my surprise when I received a call a few days later telling informing me that Martin had “found my bike”.

## The Real Cost of Riding...

### Why Did My Dream Bike Had to Give My Bank Manager Nightmares?

Long story short – I drove away from the showroom a week or so later, on a 2011 Pikes Peak Edition, 20,000 miles, immaculate condition, Ducati sat nav, with decals designed by my youngest daughter fitted for free. Riding away from the showroom, I felt the happiest biker on the planet. I had switched the power down to the 100bhp Urban Mode to allow me to get used to the new bike (already a step up from the 65bhp VStrom). The bike felt about the same height and bulk as the VStrom, but the handling was light years ahead and after a weekend in Wales, I was using sport mode with relish!

I used the bike every day, did some weekend trips and had a fabulous five-day camping trip to Luxembourg in September which has got to count as one of my best biking experiences ever. The bike was the most versatile, fun, grin-inducing machine I had ever owned or indeed could imagine owning. Camping weekends, long boring motorway hauls, city rush-hour busting – solo, two up, fully loaded, the lot. It improved my riding and when needed compensated for and corrected my mistakes. Amazing!



#### The Multistrada Camping in Luxembourg

However, a couple of months, the famed (or infamous?) Ducati reliability soon began to niggle me. A fault developed on an exhaust sensor which triggered a warning light, the fuel gauge needed replacing, the clutch slave cylinder developed a leak, the forks developed a rattle and were sent away to be rebuilt, the battery gave up the ghost on the morning of the first cold snap in November. The bike was in the workshop more times (I think five) over a nine-month period than the Suzuki had been during the 2 ½ years I had it.

## The Real Cost of Riding...

### Why Did My Dream Bike Had to Give My Bank Manager Nightmares?

This was becoming a very different owner experience than I was used to. I was used to only taking the VStrom to the garage once a year for its MOT. Ducati Manchester were amazing in the support they provided. They covered everything (except the battery) on warranty, lent me a loan bike each time, but the hassle began to wear me down.

Eventually all the niggles were ironed out and I was running a trouble-free machine. I then booked the bike in for its 30,000 major / desmo service in December (belts, valves, etc). A three-day booking turned into six because a part hadn't arrived from Italy. I was already peeved at this, but when they handed me an invoice for £1,350 I nearly fainted. After a bit of friendly banter / negotiation, they reduced the price to £1,000, but by the time I had ridden home some 40 minutes later I had decided that the bike was not a viable year-round machine for me and had to go.

I do about 12,000 miles a year and worked out that even doing the minor 7,500 mile service myself, by the time I had put tyres on, accounted for chain and sprockets wear, etc – the annual maintenance costs would be close to £2,000 per year which was £300 more than I was spending on fuel... and that was before anything “major” went wrong. I rang round and checked with other Ducati dealers and they confirmed that the 30,000-mile service is always over £1,000, sometimes close to £1,500. I had a scout around for garages local to me that could do the 30,000 service but drew a blank. Steven and Paul at J&S in Delemere were helpful (as always) but weren't comfortable taking it on.

So, the bike currently is mothballed for the winter. Optimiser plugged in. Run up every couple of weeks, ready to be sold in the Spring.

In the MultiStrada's place now stands a 2015 Tiger Sport. 7,000 miles, full luggage, “showroom” condition, heated grips and main stand. I purchased it from the Superbike Factory in Macclesfield for £6,600. The major 12,000-mile service is “fixed” by Triumph at <£500 (plus I'm told c. £100 contingency for shims). I've only had the Tiger for a month but so far, I think it's going to do almost everything I need at a more affordable cost than the Ducati. It doesn't have anything close to the “grin factor” of the Ducati, but it's light years ahead of the VStrom on this. I'm sure I won't ever be able to repeat the almost ridiculously low running / maintenance costs of the VStrom, but I'm hoping that the Triumph will cost me significantly less than the MultiStrada. Fingers crossed on that one...





## The Real Cost of Riding...

### Why Did My Dream Bike Had to Give My Bank Manager Nightmares?



#### Many articles in the Press call the Tiger Sport “The British MultiStrada”(?)

Having spoken to many bikers, it seems that Ducati has by far the highest maintenance / servicing costs of any brand. GS riders tell me their “main service” costs <£400. For a rider of modest means like me and doing more than 5,000 miles a year, this takes the otherwise excellent MultiStrada beyond the realms of affordability. The costs of ownership isn't something that I remember reading about very often in the motorcycle press. Maybe it's time for this and other practicalities of motorcycling to be given more column inches in the media? (or maybe I wasn't looking carefully enough for any “off putting information” when researching what I was hoping to be my dream bike). Also, on a more general point, maybe it's time that all bike manufacturers try to get service / maintenance costs down to the cost of modern cars. My wife's 2014 Qashqai came with a four-year warranty and now costs her £20/month on a fixed service / MOT plan which includes UK & European Roadside Breakdown and Recovery. Now that's something for Ducati to aim for ☺.

So, if anyone reading this article is doing the usual 4-5,000 miles a year and is contemplating owning an immaculate beautiful recently serviced and booted Multi Strada, with all its niggles ironed out, there's one parked in my garage right now :0) **Offers to** [phil.higham@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:phil.higham@hotmail.co.uk)

**Phil Higham**

## From Small Beginnings



# 1994 to 2019



The year is 1994 and the month February, I was introduced to a man called Dale Roberts who was a member of the Cheshire Car group of Advanced Motorists, this had been brought about by the fact I had a motorcycle but hardly used it due to the fact I had no friends who rode. Dale suggested that I joined him on a ride with another member called Derek Gray, we met near Crewe and had a ride out to Ruthin, and had a coffee at the Castle view Café, long gone now I am afraid. Derek asked if I was interested in joining, I said I was, then was told I had to pass the advanced test in order to become a member, this sounded daunting at the time, but I was told I would be given training in order to pass the test.

I was informed that the members who rode motorcycles were in the process of forming an independent solos bike group as the car members rather looked down on their motorcycle brethren, Bob Higginbotham the IAM regional coordinator was helping in the organisation of the independent group, the various forms were lodged with the IAM and a group name was announced, South Cheshire Advanced Motorcyclists (SCAM) this was well before the internet had taken hold of the planet and the connotations of the word SCAM had developed.

A launch night was organised at the Railway Hotel Nantwich, this was publicised and the interest was overwhelming, some thirty people attended and joined the fledgling group, this threw the barely formed group into panic, how were they going to train all these people, the infrastructure was not in place, there was Fred Dean Chairman, Dave Leader Chief Observer, Derek Gray, Dave Coomber observers, and that was about it.

## From Small Beginnings



The panic was probably similar to that night on the Titanic, the fact you could not swim was irrelevant, so I think it was fair to say that members were just press ganged into becoming Observers, a far cry from today, I had already been allocated an Observer Derek Gray, it was conducted on a one to one basis in those days you arranged your own sessions, fortunately for me I was available most Sundays as was Derek so we formed a good relationship and a firm friendship over the weeks of training. Fred Dean had a man called Brian Kitson.

March 1994 saw the formation of SCAM group no 5213, 5 being the region we in from the IAM point, and 213 as we were the 213<sup>th</sup> group cars and bikes. The situation at that time was Fred Dean Chairman, Dave Leader Chief Observer, Derek Gray, Dave Coomber, Steve Wood, John Rossiter, and Dave Whittick Observers. And I think a couple of other members were on the committee as well, Mathew Kay I seem to remember.

Fortunately for the group a lot of the people who were carried along on the tidal wave of excitement that evening at the Railway Hotel Nantwich did not actually follow through on their commitment to undertake the training, as well as the lack of follow up from the group so it was inevitable that there were going to losses.

June 1994 saw SCAM achieve its first test pass as an independent group, a nice man called Chris Steel, the second success a few weeks later was Brian Kitson two members for whom destiny was calling.

The seeds had been sown, now it was time to see what was going to be harvested.

TO BE CONTINUED

Chris Steel





## Test Pass's

Andy Willis, Paddy McMaster  
Colin Cummins-White



### Club Events

## MONTHLY CLUB NITE

Last Thursday of the month at the Hawk Inn in Haslington by Crewe – starting August– Our own version of Conversation Street, I'm sure there will be plenty of discussion and maybe some of it repeatable too! 8pm onwards all welcome.



### **Other Events of a two-wheeled nature**

#### **Land Rover Experience Liverpool - maximum 12 people to one instructor**

Our Manufacturing Tours are £49.00 per person we can off a 5% discount for groups.

Morning Tours begin at 9:00am and finish at 12:00pm or at 13:00pm and finish at 4:00pm

A welcome drink and introduction before visiting the huge industrial presses stamping out rolls of steel into perfect 3D panels.

View our family of robots welding, riveting, bonding and measuring these panels with incredible accuracy time after time to create the finished body.

Then on to the mind-blowing logistics of Trim and Final, where everything comes together.

And the final stage - our dedicated quality team scrutinising each vehicle to ensure it meets our standards.

#### **Please let us know if you would like us to arrange a group visit for this**

15-17<sup>th</sup> February – Carol Nash MCN London Bike Show

9-10<sup>th</sup> March – MCN Scottish Motorcycle Show – Royal Highland Centre - Edinburgh

### **Caption Competition – NEW = well after I lost it last month!**

Let's give this one a try! It's Sue Rogers fault honest!

Answers as usual to [biker5chef@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:biker5chef@yahoo.co.uk)

Fire Away!

Still no entries for this one!



## Club Website Information

We have fresh hands going over our website

<http://www.southcheshiream.org.uk/> reorganising it and updating the diary and Gallery to start off with.

We are now hosting the photographs through our Flickr account to make it easier to upload these and manage them. Link here: -

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/155059034@N08/albums>

So please any pictures taken on any club or interesting bike ride out send them over to Geoff Highfield at [gh@highfieldassociates.co.uk](mailto:gh@highfieldassociates.co.uk) or directly to Richard Kinsey at: [richard.kinsey@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:richard.kinsey@tiscali.co.uk) with a brief description and they will arrange for these to be put on to it. A Long or Short story will get a selection in the newsletter for an article too!

If you hold them in a Microsoft programme/file such as "Pictures" you can select the ones you want to send, right click on the mouse on one of them and select "send to", left click on "send to" and left click on "mail recipient". You will be asked what size pictures you want to send. Click on "large". An email will be formed in Microsoft Outlook. Complete it in the usual way and send to me. Use of this method significantly reduces the size of the picture so that several can be sent together.

If you hold them on a smart phone you can mail them directly but in small groups. Some smart phones such as the iPhone will ask if you want to reduce the size of the bundle if it is too big.

If you want a note of recognition/ownership for the photos, please tell us.

Holiday pictures, Presentation Evening, Anniversary Ride Out, Christmas Meal, A date with "Just Jane"? (Interesting) and more are there already.





## Group Events

Sunday Ride Outs – NEW WINTER TIME its 10am from Costa Coffee at the Grand Junction Retail Park - CREWE - arrive early with a full tank of fuel. Usually 150-200 miles but if you want to do a shorter one we will not take offence at you turning back early.

Wednesday Evening Ride Outs – In hibernation till Spring/Summer time

Last Thursday of the month – Club Night – The Hawk Haslington - 8pm onwards

## FOR SALE – New lower Price!

Oxford Paddock Stand

Never Used £30

Can Deliver

Phone Gordon 07590596380

Any other items you have for sale just get in touch with an email to the Ed



That's all this month

Hope you all get out on your bikes to give us some more stories

The Highlander

